



His *Majesties* Answer to a late Petition
presented unto Him by the hands of *Alexander*
Henderſon, from the Commissioners of the generall
Assembly of the Church of Scotland.



WE received lately a Petition from you, by the
hands of Mr. *Alexander Henderſon*, To the which
We intended to have given an answer, as ſoone as
Wee had tranſacted the buſineſſe with the other
Commissioners addreſſed to us from the Conſerva-
tors of the Treaſury of that our Kingdom. But finding the ſame to
be publiſhed in Print, and to be diſperſed throughout Our King-
dom, to the great danger of Scandalling of Our well-aſſected
Subjects, who may interpret the bitterneſſe and ſharpeneſſe of
ſome Expreſſions not to be ſo agreeable to that regard and Reve-
rence which is due to our Perſon, and the matter it ſelfe to be re-
proachfull to the honour and conſtitution of this Kingdom, We
have beene compelled the more ſtrictly to examine as well the
Authority of the Petitioners, as the matter of the Petition it
ſelfe, and to publiſh Our opinion of both, that Our Subjects of
both Kingdomes may ſee how equally, juſt, and ſenſible We are
of the Lawes and Honour of both Our Kingdomes.

And firſt, upon peruſall of the Petition, We required to ſee the
Commission by which the meſſenger who brought this Petiti-
on, or the perſons who ſent him, are qualified to intermeddle in
Affaires ſo forraigne to their Jurisdiction, and of ſo great con-
cernment to this Our Kingdom of England. Vpon Examination
whereof, and in defence of the Lawes and Government of this
Our Kingdom, which We are truſted and ſworn to defend, We
muſt profeſſe that the Petitioners, or the generall Aſſembly of
Our Church of Scotland have not the leaſt Authority or Power
to intermeddle or interpoſe in the Affaires of this Kingdom or
Church, which are ſetled and eſtabliſhed by the proper Lawes
of this Land, and till they be ſhewed by the ſame competent po-
wer, cannot be overweighed againſt without a due ſerce of Vs and
this Nation, much leſſe can they preſent any advice or Declara-
tion to Our Houſes of Parliament againſt the ſame, or to that pur-
poſe



poſe to ſend any letters, as they have now done, to any Miniſters of Our Church here, who by the Lawes of this Land cannot cor-
reſpond againſt the ſame. Therefore We doe believe that the Pe-
titioners, when they ſhall conſider how unwarranted it is by the
Lawes of that Kingdom, and how contrary it is to the Lawes of
this, to the profeſſions they have made to each other, and how
becomming in it ſelfe for them to require the ancient, happy and
eſtabliſhed government of the Church of England to be altered,
and conformed to the Lawes and conſtitutions of another Church
will find themſelves miſled by the information of ſome factious
perſons here, who would willingly ingage the Petitioners to fo-
ment a difference and diviſion betweene the two Kingdomes,
which We have with ſo much care and induſtry endeavored to
prevent, not having labour'd more to quench the combustion in
this Kingdom, then We have to hinder the like from either de-
vouring Ireland, or entring into Scotland, which if alſo others
will equally labour, will undoubtedly be avoyded. But We can-
not ſo eaſily paſſe over the mention of Ireland, being moved to it
by ſcandalous Aſperſions, that have bin often caſt upon Vs up-
on that Subject, and the uſe that hath bin made of the woeful
distractions of that Kingdom, as of a Seminary of feares and jea-
louſies to beget the like distraction in this, and (which leaſt they
may have farther influence) Wee are the more willing to make
Our Innocence appeare in that particular.

When firſt that horrid Rebellion began, Wee were in Our
Kingdom of Scotland, and the ſenſe We had then of it, the ex-
preſſions We made concerning it, the Commissions (together
with ſome other Aſſiſtance) We ſent immediately into that King-
dom, and the instant Recommendation We made of it to both
Our Houſes of Parliament in England, are known to all perſons
of quality there and then about Us. After Our return into Eng-
land, Our ready conſent to all the deſires of both Houſes that
might moſt ſpeedily repreſſe that Rebellion, by paſſing the Bill
of preſſing, and in it a claufe which gained a Right challenged
by all, and enjoyed by many of Our Predeceſſors, by parting
with Our Rights in the Lands eſcheated to Us by that Rebelli-
on, for the encouragement of Adventurers, by emptying of Our
Magazines of Armes and Ammunition for that ſervice (which
We have ſince needed for Our neceſſary defence and preſervati-
on) by conſenting to all Bills for the raiſing of money for the
ſame,

same, though containing unusuall Clauses; which trusted both Houses without Vs with the matter of disposing it, Our often pressing both Houses, not to neglect that Kingdom, by being diverted by Considerations and Disputes lesse concerning both Kingdomes, Our offer of raising 10000. Voluntiers to bee sent thither, and our severall Offers to engage Our own Royall Person in the suppression of that horrid rebellion, are no lesse known to all this Nation, then Our perpetuall earnestnesse by our Forraign Ministers to keep all manner of supplies from being transported for the reliefe of the Rebels, is known to severall neighbouring Princes. Which if all Our Subjects will consider, and withall how many of the men, and how much of the money raised for that end, and how much Time, Care and Industry have been diverted from that employment, and imployed in this unnaturall War against Vs, (the true cause of the present misery and want which Our Brittish Armies there doe now endure) they will soon free Vs from all those Imputations so scandalously and groundlesly laid upon us, and impute the continuance of the Combustion of that miserable Kingdom, the danger it may bring upon our Kingdoms of *England* and *Scotland*, and the beginning of this dalefull desolation, to those who are truly guilty of it.

For unity in Religion: which is desired, We cannot but answer, That We much apprehend least the Papist may make some advantage of that expression, by continuing that scandall with more Authority, which they have ever heretofore used to cast upon the Reformation, by interpreting all the differences in Ceremony, Government, or indifferent opinions between severall Protestant Churches, to be differences in Religion; And least our good Subjects of England, who have ever esteemed themselves of the same Religion with you, should suspect themselves to be esteemed by you to bee of a contrary. And that the Religion which they and their Ancestors have held ever since the blessed Reformation, and in and for which they are resolved to dye, is taxed and branded of Falschood or Insufficiency, by such a desire.

For uniformity in Church Government, We conceiv'd the Answer formerly given by Vs to the former Petition in this argument, would have satisfied the Petitioners, and is so full, that We can add little to it. *viz. That the Government here establish'd*

Bed by the lawes, hath so neer a relation and intermixture with the Civill State (which may be unknown to the Petitioners) that till a composed digested forme be presented to us, upon a free debate of both Houses in a Parliamentary way, whereby the consent and approbation of this whole Kingdome may be had, and Wee, and all Our Subjects may discern, what is to be left in, or brought in, as well as what is to be taken away, We know not how to consent to any alteration, otherwise then to such an Act for the ease of tender Consciences in the matter of Ceremonies, as We have often offered, and that this, and any thing else that may concerne the Peace of the Church, and the Advancement of Gods true Religion may be soberly discussed, and happily effected; We have formerly offered, and are still willing that debates of that nature may be entered into by a Synod of Godly and Learned Divines, to be regularly chosen according to the Laws and Customs of this Kingdom. To which We shall be willing that some learned Divines of our Church of Scotland bee likewise sent, to be present, and offer and debate their Reasons. With this Answer the Petitioners had great reason to acquiesce, without enlarging the matter of their former Petition onely with bitter expressions against the Established Government and Laws of their neighbour Nation, (as if it were contrary to the word of God) with whom they have so lately entered into a strict Amity and Friendship.

But We cannot enough wonder, that the Petitioners should interpose themselves, not only as fit Directors and Judges betwixt us and Our two Houses of Parliament, in Business so wholly concerning the Peace and Government of this Our Kingdome, and in a matter so absolutely entrusted to us, as what new Laws to consent or not to consent to; But should assume and publish, That the desire of Reformation in this Kingdome is in a peaceable and Parliamentary way, When all the World may know, That the proceedings here, have beene and are not only contrary to all the rules and precedents of former Parliaments, but destructive to the Freedome, Priviledge, and Dignity of Parliaments themselves; That We were first driven by tumults, for the safety of Our life, from Our Cities of London and Westminster, and have been since pursued, fought withall, and are now kept from thence by an Army raysed, as is pretended, by the two Houses, which consist not of the fourth part of the number they ought to doe, the rest being either driven from

from thence by the same violence, or expelled or imprisoned for not consenting to the Treasons and unheard of Insolencies practised against Us. And if the Petitioners could believe these proceedings to be in a peaceable Parliamentary way, they were very unacquainted with the Order and constitution of this Kingdom, and not so fit instruments to procure that Reformation and Peace they seeme to desire.

We cannot but see the Intermixture of the present Ecclesiasticall Government with the Civill State to be other then a very good reason, and that the government of the Church should be by the rules of humane policy, to be other then a very good rule, unless some other government were as well proved as pretended to be better warranted by God.

Of any Bills offered Us for Reformation, Wee shall not now speake, they being a part of those Articles upon which We have offered and expect to Treat; But cannot but wonder by what authority you prejudg Our Judgment herein, by denouncing Gods anger upon Us, and Our hazard of the losse of the hearts of all Our good Subjects, if We consent not unto them. The influence of so many blessings from heaven upon the regns of *Queen Elizabeth*, and Our father of blessed memory, and the acknowledgment of them by all Protestant Churches to have been careful Nurses of the Church of Christ, and to have excellently discharged their duties in the custody and vindication of Religion, and the affection of their Subjects to them, doe sufficiently assure Vs, that We should neither stop the influence of such Blessings, nor grieve the hearts of all the godly, nor hazard the losse of the hearts of Our good Subjects, although Wee still maintain in this Kingdom the same established Ecclesiasticall government, which flourisht in their times, and under their special Protection.

Wee doubt not but Our Subjects of Scotland will rest abundantly satisfied with such alterations in their owne Church as We have assented unto, and not be periwaded by a meer Assertion, that there is no hope of the continuance of what is there settled by Law, unless that be likewise altered which is settled here; And Our Subjects of England will never depart from their dutifull affection to Us, for not consenting to new Laws, which by the law of the Land, they know, We may as justly reject if We approve not of them, as either House hath power to

prepare for, or both to propound to Vs. Nor are you a little mis-
taken if either you believe the generality of this Nation to desire
a change of Church-government, or that most of those who de-
sire it, desire by it to introduce that which you onely esteeme a
Reformation, but are as unwilling to what you call the yoke
of Christ and obedience to the Gospel, as those whom you cal
prophane and worldly men, and so equally averie both to Epis-
copacy and Presbytery, that if they should prevaile in this par-
ticular, the abolition of the one would be no let to the other,
nor would your hearts be lesse grieved, your expectations lesse
frustrated, your hopes lesse defamed, or your Reformation more
secured. And the Petitioners, upon due consideration, will not
find themselves lesse mistaken in the government of all the Re-
formed Churches, which they lay is by Assemblies, then they
are in the best way of a Reformation, which sure is best to be in
a common and ordinary way, where the passion or interest of
particular men may not impose upon the publike, but alteration
be then only made, when, upon calme Debates, and evident and
cleare Reason and convenience, the same shall be generally con-
sented to for the peace and security of the people, and those who
are trusted by the Law with such debates, are not divested of
that trust upon a generall charge of corruptions pretended to
have entred by that way, and of being the persons to be refor-
med, and so unfit to be Reformers. And certainly the like Lo-
gicke with the like charges and pretences might be us'd to make
the parliament it selfe an incorruptible Iudge of any Reformation
either in Church or State.

For the generall Expressions in the Position against Papists, in
which the Petitioners may be understood to charge Vs with com-
pliance and favour even to their opinions, We have taken all occa-
sion to publish to the world Our practice and Resolution in the true
Protestant Reformed Religion, and we are verily perswaded there
is no one Subject in either of Our Dominions, who at all knowes
Vs, and hath observed Our Life, but is in his Soule satisfied of Our
Zeale and unremoveable Affection to that Religion, and of Our
true dislike of and hearty opposition to popery. And as we willingly
consented, at our being in Scotland, to all Acts proposed to Vs, for
the discountenancing and Reforming the Papists in that our King-
dome, so by Our Proclamations for the putting of all Lawes sever-
ally in execution against Recusants, and by not refusing any one
Bill

presented to Vs for that purpose in this Kingdome, and by Our
perpetuall and publique professions of Readinesse with the Advice
of Our two Houses of Parliament prepared for Vs in a deliberate
and orderly way, to find some expedition to perfect so good a work,
Or conceiv'd we had not left it possible for any man to believe Vs
guilty of tolerating any part of the Romish Tyranny or Superstition,
or to suspect that the Conversion of Our dearest Consort, was
not so much Our desire, than the Accession of so many Crownes, as
God hath already bestowed upon us, would be more welcome to
us then that day: A Blessing which it is Our daily prayer to the
Almighty to bestow upon Vs, to preserve us out of all dangers
of But We might well have expected from the Petitioners, who
hath in their solemn National Covenant literally sworne to
much Care of the safety of Our Person, and cannot but know
in how much danger they hath bin and still is by the power and
threats of Rebelious Armes, that they would as well have re-
membered the 23. of October, as the 5. of November, and as
well have taken notice of the Army raised and led against Vs by
the Earle of Essex, while they actually assaulted and endeavoured
to murder Vs, which Wee know to abound in Brownists,
Anabaptists, and other Sectaries, and in which Wee have reason
(by the prisoners We have taken, and the Evidence they have gi-
ven) to believe there are many more Papists (and many of those
forraigners) then in all Our Army, as have advised Vs to dis-
band out of the Army of the Earle of Newcastle, which is raised
for Our defence, the papists in that Army, who are known to be
no such number as to endanger their obtaining any power of
building their *Babell*, and setting up their Idolatry, and whose
Loyalty he hath reason to commend) though hee was never sus-
pected for favouring their Religion, not before that of Prote-
stants, but of such as rebell under that Title; And whose assistance
is as due to us by the Law of God, and Man, to rescue Vs from
domestique Rebellion, as to defend Vs from forraigne invasion,
which Wee thinke no man denies to be lawfull for them to doe.
But Wee do solemnly declare and protest, That God shall no
sooner free Vs from the desperate and rebellious Armes taken up
against Vs, but Wee shall endeavour to free Our selves and King-
dome from any feare of danger from the other, by disarming
them according to the Lawes of this Land, as Wee shall not faile
to send Our Commissioner to the Assembly at the time appointed
for it by the Lawes of Scotland:

To

To conclude, We desire and require the Peditors (as
come good and pious Preachers of the Gospel) to use their
most endeavours to compose any distraction in opinions, or mis-
understandings, which may by the Faction of some turbulent
persons, be raised in the mindes of Our good Subjects of that
Our Kingdom, and to infuse into them a true sense of Charity,
Obedience and Humility, the great principles of Christian Re-
ligion; That they may not suffer themselves to bee transported
with things they doe not understand, nor think themselves con-
cerned in the Government of another Kingdom, because it is
not according to the customes of that in which they live; But
that they dispose themselves with modesty and devotion to the
service of Almighty God, with duty and affection to the obedi-
ence of Vs and Our Lawes (remembering the singular Grace, Fa-
vour and Benignity We have alwaies exprest to that Our Na-
tive Kingdom) and with Brotherly and Christian Charity one
towards another; And We doubt not but God in his mercy to Vs
and them will make Vs Instruments of his Blessings upon each
other, and both of Us a great measure of Happiness and Pro-
perity to the whole Nation.



FINIS.



